

Salem Audiology Clinic

HEAR FOR LIFE

WINTER '25

**THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF
EAR CLEANING**

**COPING WITH
TINNITUS**

Effective Strategies To
Manage Tinnitus at Work

**NEW INNOVATIONS
FROM PHONAK**

Their New Hearing Aids are
Changing The Way you Hear



HEAR FOR LIFE

Salem Audiology Clinic

Where you can trust
what you hear.

The Hear For Life magazine is published quarterly, sharing reliable information and stories about hearing loss, technology, tinnitus, and other health and hearing balance conditions.

Our magazine is designed for consumers and professionals alike highlighting current news and real-world solutions based on the latest research and technology. We meaningfully connect members of the hearing loss community to one another while providing timely information on health and hearing loss.

General topics regularly covered in the magazine:

- Tips for living well with hearing conditions
- Tools for prevention and education, and advocacy and management.



PUBLISHERS LETTER

Hearing loss can make communication challenging as it affects the way you listen to conversations. It's essential to address hearing issues because if left untreated, they can significantly impact your communication. Conversations rely heavily on hearing, and filtering out background noise is crucial. Excessive noise can distract you and make it difficult to converse if you're not focused or used to it.

Hearing loss can make it hard to hear sounds at different levels, leading to social withdrawal. See an audiologist to identify the cause of your hearing loss. In some cases, it may be due to an infection or earwax, which is treatable. Hearing aids can help you hear clearly. Contact Salem Audiology Clinic at (971) 701-6322 to learn more.

Devon Grogans
Director of Marketing & Editor



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FLEX:TRIAL™



Love the
experience™

Try before you buy

Traditional hearing assessments only happen in the clinic, a place where you hardly ever spend time. After that assessment, you're expected to make a decision to purchase a hearing solution you had never worn before and that you often can't take home on the same day. The process was broken, and the evidence was the unhappy clients and numerous hearing instruments returned every year. More than a third of newly-diagnosed clients with hearing loss wouldn't even make a purchase at all.¹ Something had to change.

A trial allows you to experience the benefits of amplification in the real world, risk-free, without commitment. It's as easy as that. In fact, 99% of hearing care professionals say that FLEX:TRIAL improves the total experience for you.²

Whether you're at a bustling restaurant or in the peace of your own home you can hear for yourself the difference that a hearing solution makes. Life doesn't sound the same every day, A real-world hearing assessment shows you what you will be able to hear, rather than just confirming what you can't hear.

As you wear them they gather data on the environments you spend time in. This allows us to understand how you listen and find the perfect solution.

It's just common sense to try before you buy. 88% of people with hearing loss considered a trial period beneficial, and 60% considered a take-home trial to be very beneficial, especially those aged 50-59 years.³

If you are interested in **FLEX: TRIAL** contact us today **(971)701-6322** and schedule your no-cost consultation with one of our Audiologists.

¹ MarketTrak 9: A New Baseline "Estimating Hearing Loss Adoption Rates and Exploring Key Aspects of the Patient Journey" Final Report March 2015

² Anovum (2017) Unitron Launch Monitor

³ Unitron survey, 350 people.

Try at home Before you buy



BETTER HEARING MEANS

- Improved Relationships
- Greater Self-esteem
- Enhanced Overall Health

LEARN MORE

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Ear Cleaning

The Do's & Don'ts

Taking care of your ears is essential for maintaining good hearing health.

However, many people need help to clean their ears properly.

Improper ear cleaning can lead to hearing problems, infections, and even hearing loss.

Many products are advertised for ear cleaning, from cotton swabs to ear candles. However, our ears have built-in systems for cleaning themselves. The best way to ensure your ear canals are healthy and functioning is to avoid interfering with these natural processes. However, see a doctor if you notice ear pain, ear fullness, or hearing changes. Here are some do's and don'ts when clearing your ears.

Don't: use cotton swabs to clean the inside of your ears

A common mistake many people make when cleaning their ears is using cotton swabs. While using cotton swabs outside your ear is okay, you should never stick them deep inside your ear canal. A cotton swab can cause severe damage to your ear because it can push earwax further down the ear, slow the natural process of earwax removal, and result in an eardrum injury.

Swabbing or sticking pointy objects inside your ear can cause other serious problems:

- Infection
- Rupture of the eardrum
- Significant hearing loss

Do: Try a Warm Washcloth

To clean your ears safely, you can use a damp washcloth. Just use a warm, damp washcloth to clean the outside of your ear. Then, use a dry washcloth to gently dry your ears. Doing this regularly can help keep your ears clean and lower the chances of getting ear infections.

Don't: use ear candles to remove wax

Using ear candles to clean your ears is one of the worst ways. Even though they might seem like a good idea, they can be dangerous. The FDA has found that they can cause burns and hurt the inside of your ear. There's no proof that they work – they don't create enough suction to pull the wax out of your ear. Therefore, avoiding using ear candles to clean your ears is best.

Do: Get Ear Drops

Consider using ear drops instead of ear candles. You can buy over-the-counter ear drops designed for softening and removing ear wax. However, do not use them if you have an active ear disease or suspect a perforated eardrum.

How often should I clean my ears?

It's best not to clean your ears too frequently. Cleaning them too often can irritate or worsen things by pushing wax further into your ear canal. Your ears are typically pretty good at cleaning themselves, so you usually don't need to do much. If you need to clean them, focus on the outer part by gently wiping them with a damp washcloth. This should remove any wax that has come out on its own.



Phonak **Infinio**

Phonak has revealed its newest innovation in hearing technology, the Phonak Infinio. With the addition of Bluetooth LE Audio and AI-based denoising, Phonak's latest range aims to revolutionize the company and its customers.

Here's a closer look at what makes these devices stand out.

The Phonak Audéo Infinio Series: A Tradition of Innovation. Phonak is recognized as a leader in the hearing aid industry. The Audéo Infinio continues this tradition, offering a range of models designed to meet the diverse needs of hearing aid users.

The Infinio series includes several models, each with its own unique features:

Audéo Infinio R: is a versatile rechargeable receiver-in-canal (RIC) hearing aid suitable for various levels of hearing loss. The updated device features exceptional speech clarity and sound quality, universal connectivity, and various colors.

Audéo Infinio CROS: This model is tailored for individuals with unilateral hearing loss and offers improved battery life and sound clarity. The updated CROS device's battery can now last a whole day of use, which was met with tremendous praise from CROS wearers.

Audéo Infinio Sphere: Offered in the two top tech tiers, this hearing aid is the most advanced option due to its groundbreaking real-time AI technology and dual-chip architecture. It provides exceptional

speech clarity in challenging hearing situations.

In simple terms, this allows the Sphere to adjust dynamically to complex auditory environments in real-time, offering a level of sound management that was previously unachievable.

Dual-Chip Architecture: The dual-chip architecture powers Sphere's real-time AI processing, providing clear speech even in noisy environments.

Enhanced Bluetooth

Connectivity: In today's digital age, Phonak's Sphere offers enhanced Bluetooth capabilities with a more extended range, making it ideal for active users. It seamlessly connects to multiple devices, including Android and iPhone, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity at home, in the office, or on the go.

Durability and Waterproofing:

Phonak has enhanced the durability of the Audéo Infinio Sphere with advanced waterproofing and robust construction, making it a reliable choice for everyday use. The device can withstand occasional exposure to water and is designed to perform at its best, day in and day out. It's an excellent option for users with active lifestyles, offering peace of mind.

Comparative Analysis: Infinio Sphere vs. Other Infinio Models

The Audéo Infinio R is a solid choice for those needing a rechargeable RIC hearing aid, while the Audéo Infinio CROS is designed specifically for unilateral hearing loss. The Infinio Sphere stands out as the most advanced and feature-rich option in the series, offering the latest in hearing aid technology.



Spheric Speech Clarity: Phonak's new Sphere Infinio features AI-powered chip architecture for enhanced speech understanding in noisy environments. The device introduces Spheric Speech Clarity, using advanced AI to separate speech from background noise in real time. The DEEPSONIC™ chip automatically adjusts settings for optimal speech clarity, reducing listening effort. Clinical studies show an improvement of 10dB signal-to-noise ratio, making conversations easier in challenging situations.

Reduced Listening Effort

and Fatigue: The Sphere reduces listening effort and fatigue for hearing aid users. Studies show it can decrease listening effort by 45% in quiet environments and decrease fatigue by 21% with the Speech Enhancer feature acti-

vated. These results highlight its potential to improve users' quality of life.

Virto Infinio: (coming 2025)

These custom hearing aids are offered in various forms, including rechargeable in-the-canal (ITC), battery-powered completely in-canal (CIC), and titanium invisible-in-canal models.

Conclusion

The Phonak Infinio series is a significant advancement in hearing aid technology, offering improved sound quality, connectivity, and durability. The Spheric Speech Clarity system, powered by the DEEPSONIC™ chip, sets a new standard for understanding speech in noisy environments. Stay tuned for my detailed review after fitting these in patients' ears for real-world feedback. For now, the Phonak Infinio is a promising addition to the world of hearing aids.

COPING WITH TINNITUS IN THE WORKPLACE



Tinnitus is when individuals experience constant or intermittent ringing in their ears. Certain factors can worsen this ringing, which may occur without external sounds. Studies indicate that about 45% of workers experience some level of tinnitus, but many employees with tinnitus choose not to disclose their condition to their employers or colleagues.

For many people with tinnitus, the workplace can become a psychological battleground. The constant ringing in their ears can lead to increased anxiety and stress, making it difficult to maintain focus and composure. The fear of job loss, dealing with difficult coworkers, and stressful meetings can exacerbate these challenges. Over time, the struggle to ignore the sound of tinnitus and concentrate on tasks becomes increasingly difficult.

Tinnitus Causes Difficulties in Concentrating

Tinnitus can make it hard to concentrate. In a survey, 41% of people with tinnitus had mild trouble concentrating, 33% had moderate trouble, and 20% had severe trouble. Only a few said they had no problems concentrating. It's important to tell the difference between concentration fatigue from hearing loss and concentration problems caused by tinnitus. With tinnitus, the constant noise in your head makes it hard to focus. Severe tinnitus can also lead to anxiety and sleep problems, making it even harder to concentrate.

Recommended Solutions: Sound Masking

Sound masking, also known as sound therapy? It's a way to lessen the loudness of tinnitus by playing background noise. This can help make the tinnitus

less bothersome, especially in quiet places. Finding the proper background noise that enables you to concentrate and work effectively can make a big difference.

Hearing aids

Ideal for individuals with hearing challenges.

If you have trouble hearing and experience ringing, using hearing aids can be beneficial. These devices come with modern features like Bluetooth and built-in tinnitus masking to help reduce the perception of the ringing. They can be adjusted to play sounds like white noise to lessen the impact of the ringing.

Hearing aids subtly mask the ringing while allowing you to listen to the world around you. The main drawbacks are that they can be expensive, and the sound

quality might be better than that of headphones or speakers.

Headphones for Tinnitus Masking

Open-ear headphones

Open-ear headphones are a recent technology that directs sound into the ear without blocking the ear canal. This allows you to listen to masking sounds or music while still being able to hear your surroundings. They are ideal for tinnitus masking in office settings where you must be attentive to conversations or meetings and work well for people in communal spaces.

Bone conduction headphones

Bone conduction headphones are fabulous for tinnitus sufferers who must know their surroundings. They transmit sound through the skull to the inner ear,

leaving your ears open to hear ambient sounds. This is perfect for work environments where situational awareness is essential, and they work exceptionally well for those with hearing aids.

Bluetooth speaker

A Bluetooth speaker is an excellent choice for playing masking sounds or calming music for private spaces, such as closed-door offices or remote work environments. Many Bluetooth speakers are portable, allowing you to move them from room to room as needed. Noise-canceling headphones

In noisy environments, such as crowded offices or communal workspaces, noise-canceling headphones can effectively block out loud external sounds. This allows you to listen to masking sounds clearly at lower volume levels. However, a downside is that you may have to take them off to communicate with others frequently.

Re-directing Your Focus & Pay attention to your environment

One helpful way to manage the ringing in your ears is by learning to redirect your attention elsewhere. Because tinnitus differs for everyone, various factors can influence how much you notice it.

If you focus on the ringing, it can feel even louder. So, instead of dwelling on it, try focusing on your work or something that needs your attention. Background noise, like the hustle and bustle of an office, can also distract you from the ringing.

However, the ringing could worsen if the noise around you is deafening. For example, if you work in a noisy place like construction, you should use high-quality earplugs to block out the extra noise.

Minimize Stress and Anxiety

Stress can worsen tinnitus symptoms. It's a two-way street - stress can make tinnitus worse, and tinnitus can cause more stress and anxiety. Managing stress is essential, especially at work. You can leave home earlier to avoid getting stressed by traffic, ensure you get a good night's sleep, and set limits for yourself so you don't get overwhelmed with work.

Even if you love your job, tinnitus can make it hard to handle stress. So, it's important to take some time to relax and calm down when you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Ignoring your tinnitus and pushing through anxiety can just make things worse.

Federal protections for employees with tinnitus
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a US law that ensures people with disabilities are treated fairly at work. It applies to companies with at least 15 employees. The ADA says that if a person can do the job



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The ADA doesn't specifically mention tinnitus (a ringing in the ears), but it has rules that cover a wide range of disabilities. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) mentions tinnitus, which ensures that the ADA is followed at work.

The EEOC explains that even though the ADA doesn't spell out tinnitus, it should be considered a disability in the workplace under the ADA. This means employers should make reasonable changes to help employees with tinnitus do their jobs better.

What you can do

Employers and employees can collaborate to take straightforward actions that will make a significant difference.

Dealing with tinnitus can make it hard for some people to work due to anxiety. They may need time off, and accommodations when possible are important. Most people eventually get used to the condition, but some may need to make permanent changes, such as finding a less demanding job. It's important to be open to discussing available options.

Small changes in the workplace, like adjusting seating and using headphones to block out noise, can make a big difference. Employers could also consider letting employees work from home. Everyone's needs are different, so it's essential to understand and accommodate them.

It's important to educate employers and HR departments about how to support individuals with tinnitus at work.

If you need guidance, Salem Audiology Clinic offers no-cost Tinnitus classes. Or call us today at (971) 701-6322 and schedule a consultation with one of our audiologists.



YOUR Food

Prep
20 minutes

Cook
30 minutes

1 pan Garlic chicken and Veggies

Nutrition Facts (per serving): 692 Calories | 43g Fat | 41g Carbs | 35g Protein

What You Will Need

- Bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- Olive oil
- Fresh herbs – rosemary, thyme, sage
- Red wine vinegar
- Garlic
- Brussels sprouts
- Sweet potato
- Fuji apples (or other sweet baking apples)
- Bacon
- Salt and pepper

Let's Make It

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. pour in 2 Tbsp olive oil, red wine vinegar, herbs and garlic into a gallon size resealable bag.
3. Add chicken and season with salt and pepper then rub mixture over chicken.
4. Let rest while you prep remaining ingredients.
5. Add sweet potatoes, apples, Brussels sprouts, and shallots to a rimmed 18 by 13-inch baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 Tbsp olive oil, season with salt and pepper then toss to coat.
6. Spread into an even layer.
7. Top with chicken pieces and sprinkle bacon over veggie/apple mixture.
8. Roast in preheated oven until chicken has cooked through and veggies are tender, about 30 – 35 minutes, broil during last few minutes for more browned crispy chicken skin. Serve warm.
9. Garnish with parsley if desired and serve warm.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



What do you do at Salem Audiology Clinic?

I am an audiologist at our South office, and I have the privilege of working with individuals across all age groups by assessing, diagnosing, and treating hearing loss. Whether it's conducting detailed hearing tests, analyzing auditory responses, or collaborating with other healthcare professionals, I am dedicated to providing personalized care tailored to meet the unique needs of every individual. Through ongoing education, research, and a genuine commitment to improving the lives of those with hearing impairments, I strive to make a meaningful difference in the quality of life for each patient I serve.

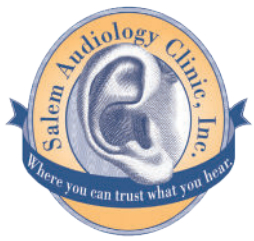
Tell us a little about you:

Growing up in Minnesota, I graduated from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire with a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders. During summers, I worked at YMCA Camp St. Croix, where I taught outdoor activities, such as sailing, canoeing and hiking. It is also where I met my husband! I then came to Oregon to get my clinical doctorate degree in audiology from Pacific University. After a brief return to Minnesota, I realized that Minnesota winters were no longer for me and came back to Oregon. Now, outside work, you'll find me exploring dog parks and beaches with my husband and our two mini-aussiedoodles, Costco and Trader Joe; or you'll find me enjoying time with friends exploring in the Pacific Northwest. Whenever friends and family from the Midwest come out to visit, I happily become their tour guide, showing them the beauty of Oregon and all it has to offer.

How did you come about working at SAC?

During my graduate school rotations, I had the opportunity to intern at Salem Audiology Clinic under the guidance of Dr. Megan Larson at our North location. It was there that I witnessed firsthand the exceptional teamwork and supportive environment that define the clinic. Dr. Larson and the entire team treated me with utmost kindness and respect, fostering a truly enriching learning experience. In another rotation, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Kasey Brickey - an audiologist at our South location - at an ENT practice in Missoula, Montana. My collaboration with Dr. Brickey allowed me to delve deeper into my interest in bone-anchored hearing aids and cochlear implants, areas I am passionate about pursuing further in my career. When the time came to choose a job after graduation, it felt like everything fell into place. Having already formed connections with two wonderful audiologists that are now at Salem Audiology Clinic and experiencing firsthand their welcoming office environment, the decision was clear. Joining the team felt like the perfect fit, and I am excited to continue growing and learning in such a supportive and dynamic workplace.





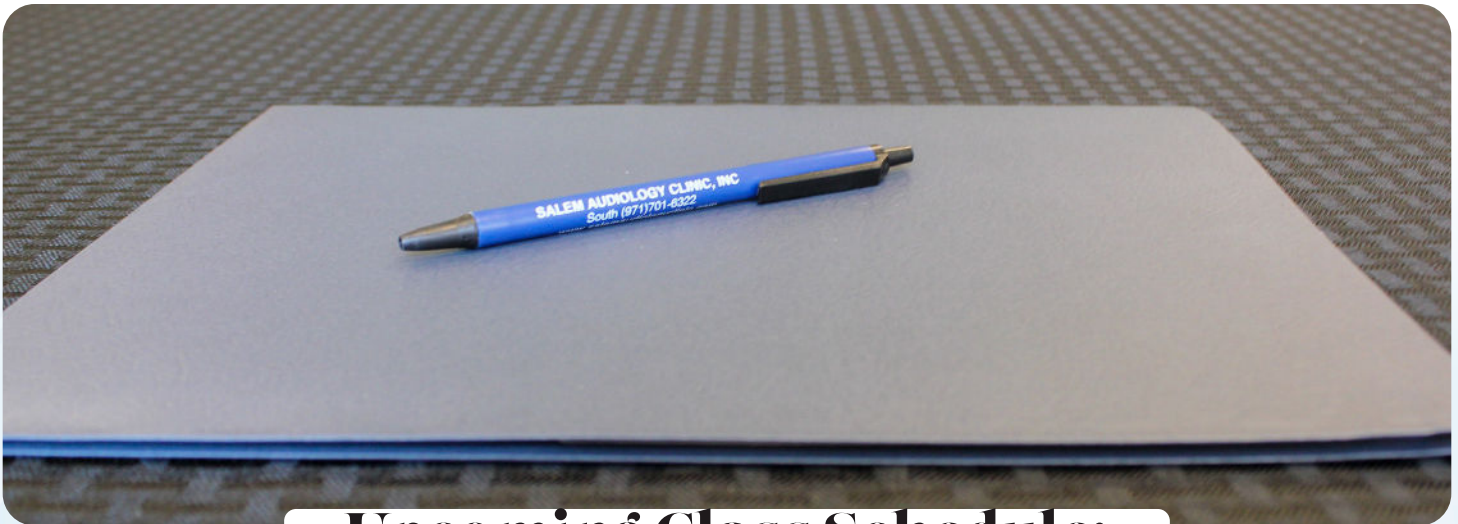
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"Where You Can Trust What You Hear"

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Upcoming Class Schedule:

February

8th - Weekend Academy 10am-3pm (lunch provided)

15th - Phonak Class 10am-12pm

March

8th - Weekend Academy 10am-3pm (lunch provided)

15th - Widex Class 10am-12pm

More ways to connect with us



Follow us on YouTube for reviews, hearing aid tips, advice and more.

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